

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 ACDA-12 CA-01 HA-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 STR-07 /113 W
-----055567 181058Z /11

R 181014Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7172
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BERLIN 02636

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GE, US
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS (IIB) OFFICIALS

REFS: (A) STATE 64384; (B) BERLIN 2550

1. SUMMARY: AT THE REQUEST OF DR. KARL-ERNST
PLAGEMANN, PROFESSOR AT THE GDR INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IIB), THREE EMBOFFS
(PAO, POLOFF, AND ECONOFF) MET WITH MEMBERS OF THE
IIB STAFF AT INSTITUTE'S EAST BERLIN OFFICE ON
APRIL 13 FOR WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION ON US-GDR
RELATIONS AND OTHER TOPICS. INSTITUTE MEMBERS RAISED
QUESTIONS ABOUT US-GDR CONSULAR CONVENTION, MFN
AND TRADE, THE NEUTRON BOMB AND US ASSESSMENT OF THE
BELGRADE CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. PAO, POLOFF AND ECONOFF MET IN TWO-HOUR
INFORMAL SESSION WITH DR. PLAGEMANN, DR. GERWIN
SCHWEIGER, DR. WALTER STOCK AND DR. SACH, MEMBERS OF
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THE IIB STAFF. SESSION HAD BEEN REQUESTED AND
ORGANIZED BY PLAGEMANN WHO HAD SUGGESTED SUCH A MEETING
BEFORE HIS VISIT TO THE US (REFTEL A).

3. POLOFF BEGAN DISCUSSION WITH A BRIEF REVIEW OF
US-GDR RELATIONS ALONG FOLLOWING LINES. THE LONG
PERIOD OF ISOLATION AND OPPOSITION HAD CREATED A

HERITAGE OF MISTRUST AND MISUNDERSTANDING, THAT US AND GDR WERE IN THE EARLY STAGES OF RELATIONS AND WERE ONLY SLOWLY BEGINNING TO LEARN TO WORK TOGETHER. US POLICY TOWARDS THE GDR HAD TO BE SEEN IN TERMS OF BROADER US POLICIES INVOLVING US INTERESTS IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND SECURITY IN EUROPE AND US INTERESTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT.

4. IN TERMS OF SPECIFIC BILATERAL ISSUES, POLOFF SAID US BELIEVES THERE ARE AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST WHERE COOPERATION CAN BENEFIT BOTH SIDES. OUR OBJECT IS TO TRY TO IDENTIFY THESE AREAS. TRADE, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ISSUES, AND QUESTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE ARE AREAS IN WHICH THE US AND GDR MIGHT HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS AND IN WHICH COOPERATION MIGHT PROVE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WERE ENCOURAGING INCLUDED THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CULTURAL FIELD, POSITIVE STEPS ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND THE RECENT US-GDR CLAIMS DISCUSSIONS. AREAS IN WHICH IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO MAKE PROGRESS IN ORDER FOR US-GDR RELATIONS TO DEVELOP FURTHER INCLUDED, SPECIFICALLY, RESOLUTION OF REMAINING HUMANITARIAN CASES, COOPERATION IN PROCESSING US CLAIMS DOCUMENTATION, AND MOVEMENT ON THE CONSULAR CONVENTION.

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5. PAO ADDRESSED CULTURAL AND INFORMATION PROGRAMS WITHIN CONTEXT OF ICA AND PRESIDENTIAL MISSION, CITING IMPORTANCE OF TWO-WAY ORIENTATION IN BOTH AREAS, AS EXEMPLIFIED IN PAUL STRAND AND DRESDEN EXHIBITS. A CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE IS BEING SHOWN BY GDR OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IS BEING DEVELOPED. BY CONTRAST, A NEGATIVE, DISTORTED AND PICAYUNE TREATMENT OF THE US IS CARRIED IN THE EAST GERMAN PRESS. IN ADDRESSING THE GDR'S IMAGE IN THE US, HE ALSO DETAILED THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY US JOURNALISTS ATTEMPTING TO WRITE NEWS STORIES ON THE GDR. PAO CONCLUDED BY UNDERLINING THE SEEMING CONTRADICTION OF INTENTIONS BETWEEN THE GDR'S APPROACH TO BILATERAL CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL AFFAIRS. ECONOFF SAID THE HIGHLY INDUSTRIALIZED ECONOMIES OF THE US AND THE GDR OFFER MANY POTENTIAL AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST. TRAVEL AND CONTACTS BY BUSINESS PEOPLE ON BOTH SIDES HAVE BEEN INCREASING STEADILY; AND WE WELCOME WHAT APPEARS TO BE A DECISION ON THE GDR'S PART INCREASINGLY TO INCLUDE US FIRMS IN THE UNIVERSE OF FIRMS FROM WHICH THE GDR SEEKS QUOTATIONS

ON MAJOR BUSINESS PROPOSALS. ECONOFF SAID US BUSINESS EVALUATES GDR PROPOSALS ON COMMERCIAL CRITERIA, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT IN DUE COURSE A UNITED STATES FIRM WILL WIN A MAJOR ROLE IN A GDR CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT.

6. FOLLOWING THE ABOVE PRESENTATION BY EMBOFFS, THERE WAS A LIVELY EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. IIB STAFF MEMBERS ASKED A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS RELATED BOTH TO US-GDR RELATIONS AND TO BROADER ISSUES. SCHWEIGER ASKED POLOFF WHETHER HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT STALEMATE IN CONSULAR CONVENTION NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE BROKEN. POLOFF STATED THAT HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT US

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IO-13 ACDA-12 CA-01 HA-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 STR-07 /113 W
-----055714 181058Z /11

R 181014Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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PROPOSALS TO RESOLVE THE NATIONALITY ISSUE WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE GDR AS HE BELIEVED THAT THEY CONSTITUTED A GOOD BASIS FOR COMPROMISE. SCHWEIGER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT US OBJECTED TO INCLUSION IN ANY CONSULAR CONVENTION OF A DEFINITION OF NATIONALITY. HE ASKED WHETHER, IN ADDITION TO THAT "FORMAL" OBJECTION, THE US HAD POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES (SPECIFICALLY IN TERMS OF ITS RELATIONS WITH THE FRG). POLOFF ACKNOWLEDGED THAT US DIFFICULTIES WITH GDR FORMULATION WERE NOT BASED ENTIRELY ON FORMAL OBJECTION TO AN INCLUSION OF A DEFINITION OF NATIONALITY. POLOFF NOTED THAT US HAD SPECIAL CONCERNS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. HOWEVER, IN US VIEW, THERE IS NO REASON WHY THIS NEED PREVENT AGREEMENT ON A CONSULAR CONVENTION WHICH WOULD

BE IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES. SCHWEIGER OBSERVED THAT THE GDR HAD NEGOTIATED CONSULAR CONVENTIONS CONTAINING ITS PREFERRED LANGUAGE WITH SEVERAL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE UK AND AUSTRIA, AND THAT THE GDR COULD NOT SIGN ANY AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD UNDERMINE THESE EARLIER TREATIES. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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OPTIMISTIC THAT A PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO THIS QUESTION COULD BE FOUND. PAO POINTED OUT THAT IN CULTURAL PROGRAM NEGOTIATION, GDR SIDE HAD SHOWN FLEXIBILITY WITHOUT SACRIFICING PRINCIPLE ON STATUS OF BERLIN, AND THEREFORE SIMILAR APPROACH ON CONSULAR CONVENTION SHOULD BE POSSIBLE.

7. DR. STOCK REFERRED TO DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE RELATIONS, ASKING WHETHER THE QUESTION OF MFN DID NOT IMPOSE A BURDEN OF A POLITICAL CHARACTER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE RELATIONS. ECONOFF SAID NO ONE WOULD ARGUE THAT THE ABSENCE OF MFN DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A RELATIVE DISADVANTAGE FOR EXPORTERS OF PRODUCTS FOR WHICH THE NON-MFN TARIFF IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THE MFN TARIFF RATE. ON THE OTHER HAND, ECONOFF SAID, THE EXISTING SITUATION ENTAILS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE GDR TO SELL DESPITE THE ABSENCE OF MFN. AS AN EXAMPLE, EMBOFF SAID HE HAD JUST LEARNED OF GDR EFFORTS TO OBTAIN A LARGER SHARE OF THE UNITED STATES MARKET FOR POTASH, FOR WHICH THE MFN AND NON-MFN TARIFF RATES ARE BOTH ZERO.

8. GIVEN THAT THE US CONGRESS HAS RENDERED ITS JUDGMENT ON THE MFN ISSUE IN THE FORM OF LEGISLATION CURRENTLY IN FORCE, IT IS THE US POSITION THAT WE SHOULD SEEK WAYS OF EXPANDING TRADE WITHIN THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK. THE GDR HAS INDICATED THAT IT SEEKS TO IMPROVE ITS MARKETING EFFORT IN THE US NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABSENCE OF MFN, BECAUSE WAITING UNTIL MFN IS ACCORDED, IF IT IS ACCORDED, TO MOUNT A MARKETING EFFORT WILL LEAVE THE GDR THAT MUCH FARTHER BEHIND. WE FIND THIS VIEW SENSIBLE. CONTINUING, ECONOFF SAID THE US-GDR TRADE RELATIONSHIP IS NOT A GRAND CONFIDENTIAL

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EDIFICE THAT CAN BE ERECTED BY GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS, BUT IT IS THE SUM TOTAL OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESS DECISIONS BY INDIVIDUAL FIRMS ON BOTH SIDES THAT PERCEIVE

ADVANTAGE IN A GIVEN RELATIONSHIP OR TRANSACTION.
WE ARE GRATIFIED THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MORE
SOLID RELATIONSHIP THROUGH EXPANSION OF INDIVIDUAL
CONTACTS AND ARRANGEMENTS SEEMS TO BE PROCEEDING
APACE. RESPONDING TO EMBOFF'S PRESENTATION, PLAGEMANN
REMARKED THAT IT WAS INCUMBENT UPON THE GDR TO SEEK
OUT AREAS, AS THE POTASH EXAMPLE, WHERE THE NON-MFN
TARIFF SCHEDULE PRESENTED COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES.
HE ALSO, OBSERVED, APPARENTLY ON THE BASIS OF HIS
RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, THAT IT DID NOT SEEM
LIKELY THAT THE GDR WOULD OBTAIN MFN IN THE NEAR FUTURE;
AND HE SAID THE DECISION ON MFN WAS BASICALLY A
POLITICAL ONE WHICH, IN HIS VIEW, THE US BUSINESS
COMMUNITY SHOWED VERY LITTLE INTEREST IN ATTEMPTING
TO CHANGE.

9. SCHWEIGER ASKED WHAT FACTORES HAD ENTERED INTO
THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO POSTPONE THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE NEUTRON BOMB. POLOFF SAID HE COULD NOT GO
BEYOND WHAT HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED BY THE WHITE HOUSE.
POLOFF OUTLINED SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT HAD
LED TO EARLY PLANNING OF THE NEUTRON BOMB AND THE
PRESIDENT'S EXPLANATION OF HIS DECISION AND NOTED EARLIER
STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF
MAINTINING US MILITARY STRENGTH. PAO SUGGESTED THAT
RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND AND MORAL VALUES EMPHASIZED BY
THE PRESIDENT CERTAINLY PLAYED IMPORTANT ROLE. OTHER
ELEMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED WERE FACT THAT ONLY
10 PERCENT OF CONGRESS WAS ON RECORD AS OPPOSING
DEPLOYMENT OF NEUTRON BOMB; THAT MAJOR US PRESS
WAS NOT AGAINST BOMB, E.G. NY TIMES FAVORED DEPLOYMENT,

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IO-13 ACDA-12 CA-01 HA-05 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 STR-07 /113 W
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R 181014Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR AND WASHINGTONPOST AGREED WITH PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO DEFER DEPLOYMENT; AND FINALLY, SHRILL CAMPAIGN MOUNTED BY SOVIET UNION AND ALLIES, INCLUDING GDR, PLACED PRESIDENT IN AWKWARD POSITION OF SEEMING TO RECOIL UNDER SUCH PRESSURE IF HE HAD DECIDED TO CANCEL DEPLOYMENT.

10. PLAGEMANN RESPONDED, IN THE FORM OF A QUESTION, THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION ON THE NEUTRON BOMB WAS THE RESULT OF PRESSURE FROM LOBBYING GROUPS SUGGESTING THAT HE WAS FORCED TO MAKE THE DECISION AGAINST HIS BETTER JUDGMENT. HE SAID THAT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE US, FOR INSTANCE, HE HAD ATTENDED SESSIONS CONDUCTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE PRESENT DANGER, WHICH HE THOUGHT WERE EFFECTIVE. POLOFF STATED THAT IT WAS CERTAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION WAS A CAREFULLY CONSIDERED ONE REFLECTING BEST JUDGMENT ON US AND NATO SECURITY INTERESTS. PLAGEMANN ALSO STATED THAT THERE WAS DOUBT THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB HAD BEEN CONCEIVED AS AN ANTI-TANK WEAPON BECAUSE OF THE SUPERIORITY OF SOVIET ARMORED FORCES IN EUROPE, ALLEGING THAT IN

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FACT TECHNIQUES EXISTED TO MAKE TANKS IMMUNE FROM RADIATION AND THAT THEREFORE THE NEUTRON BOMB COULD ONLY BE USED AGAINST POPULATIONS. PAO OFFERED TO OBTAIN ICA VTR ON DECISION ON NEUTRON BOMB (BERLIN 2550). IIB STAFFERS WELCOMED THIS OFFER.

11. SCHWEIGER ASKED ABOUT US ASSESSMENT OF BELGRADE CONFERENCE. POLOFF STATED THAT, ON BALANCE, USG BELIEVED BELGRADE CONFERENCE WAS SUCCESSFUL. HUMAN RIGHTS HAS NOW CLEARLY BECOME A TOPIC OF INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION AND THAT IS AN IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENT.

12. AT THE CONCLUSION BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT THE TALK HAD BEEN HELPFUL AND THAT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD MEET AGAIN FOR FURTHER FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS.

13. AFTER MEETING SCHWEIGER TOLD PAO THAT HE WAS BEING ASSIGNED TO THE GDR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. HE SAID THAT IT WAS NOT YET DECIDED IN WHICH SECTION AND THAT HE IS NOW IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TRAINING.

14. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT SESSION WITH IIB OFFICIALS WAS USEFUL. PLAGEMANN AND OTHERS HAVE CLOSE RELATION-

SHIP WITH THE MFA AND ARE USED AS ADVISERS IN
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. DISCUSSION GAVE
EMBOFFS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK IN FAIRLY CANDID TERMS
ABOUT THE STATE OF US-GDR RELATIONS AND TO STRESS
PROBLEM AREAS WHICH NEEDED RESOLUTION. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETINGS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BERLIN02636
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780165-0724
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780447/aaaabnjr.tel
Line Count: 338
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 213b88ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 64384, 78 BERLIN 2550
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2938488
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IIB) OFFICIALS
TAGS: PEPR, GC, US, IIB, INST FOR INTL RELATIONS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/213b88ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014